

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Report on Activities Related to the Advocacy Strategic Initiative

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Information only

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
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SUMMARY: A Selective List of Major ALA Advocacy Accomplishments and Metrics

Advocacy Strategic Initiative: A Selective List of Major Accomplishments and Metrics

Goal: ALA shall advocate the public value of librarians, libraries and information services

Introduction

The work of advocating the public value of librarians, libraries, and information services can be viewed as a continuum of activities, each step building upon the preceding step. The first step is laying the groundwork through community engagement and public awareness. The second step is using advocacy training resources to turn passive support into educated action by stakeholders. The third step is to establish and advocate for legislative goals and the fourth step is to respond to opportunities and threats. ALA has been working on a wide variety of activities along this continuum and this report will highlight some of our major accomplishments. Activities will be grouped according to the four steps and will focus on efforts that safeguard the first amendment rights of library users, the passage of legislation favorable to libraries, increasing public awareness of the value of libraries, securing increased federal, state, and local funding for libraries and promoting public policies that facilitate access to information.

Advocacy efforts at ALA involve dozens of committees, scores of issues, and thousands of members working together to achieve advocacy goals. Their good work may be part of the reason the American public holds such a high regard for libraries. The [Pew Research Center](#) reported (December 2013) that Americans strongly value the role of public libraries in their

communities, both for providing access to materials and resources and for promoting literacy and improving the overall quality of life.

Laying the Groundwork

- Implement the Libraries Transforming Communities [community engagement](#) initiative in partnership with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. A [cohort](#) of ten public libraries has been selected to participate in an 18-month professional development opportunity.

Metrics: [Resources](#) for all librarians including worksheets, conversation guides and webinars are available on the Transforming Libraries website. The Transforming Libraries website received more than 100,000 page views in the last 12 months

- Create and provide a public awareness campaign, the [Campaign for America's Libraries](#)

Metrics: Thousands of libraries have used the @ your library brand to promote their library services. Campaign [resources](#) include logo downloads, public service announcements, downloadable artwork, videos, and examples of successful campaigns. In the past four years (2010-2013), the @ your library brand has been showcased on more than 300 ALA Graphics products and nearly 220,000 units have been sold. This includes Read posters, other posters and bookmarks, mugs, shirts, pencils and stickers. The @ your library brand has been used on a variety of ALA grant-funded initiatives including [Smart Investing](#) @ your library, the [American Dream](#) Starts @ your library, and [Connect with your kids](#) @ your library.

- Provide websites for the public. [I Love Libraries](#) is an advocacy website designed to keep library supporters informed about current issues, initiatives and successes in libraries of all types. [at your library](#) is the public website for ALA's Campaign for America's Libraries which promotes the value of libraries and librarians. The goal of the website is to provide information and recommended resources that everyone can take advantage of by connecting with their local library and librarians.

Metrics: Atyourlibrary.org website received more than 384,000 page views last year, has 16,300 Twitter followers, and 5,000 newsletter subscribers. The I Love Libraries website has received more than 283,000 page views last year, has nearly 64,000 Facebook fans and has 5,000 newsletter subscribers.

- Promote the [Declaration](#) for the Right to Libraries, which is designed to increase public and media awareness about the critical role of libraries in communities; inspire ongoing conversations about the role of the library in the community; cultivate a network of community allies and advocates for the library; and position the library as a trusted convener to help in the response to community issues

Metrics: Signatures have been collected from more than 150 signing [events](#) around the country and through a virtual declaration. They have been translated into six languages by users worldwide. In Lincoln, NE, 12,780 signatures were gathered in support of

school libraries. In Alabama, Governor Robert J. Bentley used the content of the Declaration to create a proclamation during Alabama Library Legislative Day. A quote from one signer in Woodbridge, VA reads: “The library is my lifeline to the world.”

- Promote the value of school libraries through the School Library Action Plan.

Metrics: Recent op-eds by ALA president Barbara Stripling on the value of school libraries were published in the April 2014 edition of [Our Children](#), the magazine of the National PTA, which reaches 30,000 PTA leaders and in the [Huffington Post](#), which receives more than 40 million unique visitors per month. In addition, letters from the ALA and AASL presidents were sent to school officials protesting cuts to school libraries. The Office for Library Advocacy (OLA) and the Public Information Office (PIO) have also worked to secure local coverage by newspapers and radio stations. Letters to the editor and op-eds were crafted and placed in the [Hartford Courant](#), [Houston Chronicle](#), and [Cincinnati Enquirer](#). Over the past year (4/1/13 – 4/1 /14), school libraries have been mentioned more than 4, 900 times with a circulation rate of more than 673 million and more than 8,200 articles on public libraries with a circulation rate of more than 1.4 billion.

- Encourage research and evaluation that documents the value and impact of all libraries

Metrics: 1) PLA and ALSC secured IMLS funding for research on the impact of the Every Child Ready to Read [program](#) on parent behavior. Strong results will provide excellent advocacy tools for public libraries seeking to demonstrate positive impact. Results will be available 2017. 2) The [Forum](#) was a year-long grant funded effort that allowed YALSA to bring together key stakeholders from the areas of libraries, education, technology, adolescent development and the for-profit and nonprofit sectors and resulted in a [report](#), *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: a Call to Action*. 3) With funding from IMLS, AASL held a [summit](#) with fifty research scholars on April 11-12, 2014. The grant project, “Causality: School Libraries and Student Success (CLASS)” will result in an agenda for future school library research. 4) ACRL was awarded an IMLS grant for a three-year project "[Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success](#)," undertaken in partnership with the Association for Institutional Research and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. The grant will support the design, implementation, and evaluation of a program to strengthen the competencies of librarians in campus leadership and data-informed advocacy.

- Establish the [Libraries Matter: Impact Research](#), a database of studies that are useful in making the case about the value of libraries to community members and other stakeholders. The annotated list includes studies that show the economic, educational and social value of libraries.

Metrics: The Libraries Matter website received almost 35,000 page views in the last 12 months.

- Promote the value of libraries through social media

Metrics: The ALA [Twitter](#) feed has more than 47,000 followers, [Google+](#) has more than 62,000 followers, and the ALA [Facebook](#) page has more than 40,000 likes. An ALA staff Social Media Team promotes content on all of the top-level ALA branded social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Tumblr.

- Prepare and publish the State of America's Libraries [report](#)

Metrics: ALA's Public Information Office (PIO) tracked via Google, more than 170,000 articles/mentions of the 2014 State of America's Libraries report.

- Promote the value of libraries through [national initiatives](#) such as National Library Week, Library Card Sign Up Month, School Library Month, National Library Workers Day, Preservation Week, Money Smart Week, Choose Privacy Week, Banned Books Week, Teen Read Week, International Games Day, National Bookmobile Day, Celebrate Teen Literature Day, Teen Tech Week, Children's Day/Book Day, also known as El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Día), National Library Legislative Day. PIO and the Campaign acquire an honorary chair for National Library Week and Library Card Sign-up Month on a pro-bono basis every year. Public service announcements (PSAs), print and web based, are distributed to the nation's libraries to send to the media in their community and use on their websites and other communication vehicles.

Metrics: Per PIO tracking software, CisionPoint, ALA and its initiatives received more than 93,000 mentions and a circulation rate of more than 12 billion, which resulted in a publicity value of more than \$18.3 million.

Provide advocacy training to turn passive support into educated action by stakeholders

- Establish [Advocacy University](#), a comprehensive clearinghouse of advocacy tools and resources for all types of libraries from ALA. Resources include free toolkits, webinars, tutorials, and suggested best practices that cover topics such as privatization, coalition building, working with elected officials, becoming a library advocate, and presenting and defending your budget. Advocacy University also provides toolkits developed through ALA presidential initiatives such as [Frontline Advocacy](#), [Cultivating your Local Notables](#), [Empowering Voices](#), [Transforming Communities](#), and [Frontline Fundraising](#) and provides links to division advocacy programs such as [Everyday Advocacy](#), developed by ALSC to focus advocacy education within the profession and community engagement.

Metrics: The Advocacy University website received more than 87,000 page views last year.

- Provide advocacy training through the *Turning the Page* initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation from 2007 to 2013. The \$8.67 million dollar program provided more than 4,300 librarians with skills and resources to seek out funds, create community partnerships, and build alliances with local and regional decision makers. At the conclusion of the grant, PLA made the training materials freely available in eleven online [courses](#).

Metrics: In the program evaluations, eight out of ten participants found the training beneficial or extremely beneficial. The PLA [website](#) shares examples of what participants said about the course and share examples of success.

- Provide consultancy services to support the efforts of advocates seeking to support and improve libraries of all types.

Metrics: The Office for Library Advocacy (OLA), on a daily basis, provides consultation and outreach to libraries in crisis situations. Through webinars, workshops, and presentations at chapter and national conferences, OLA provides training and resources to support advocates. Thanks to a grant from the Neal-Schuman Foundation, [United for Libraries](#) is providing training and consultation help to friends of the library groups, library directors and trustees in order to restore, increase or save threatened library budgets. Results are in from three libraries that received the consultancy service the first year and all three were successful in their bids – Salem-South Lyon, MI, Gilmanton, NH, and Long Beach, CA.

- Prepare and disseminate the E-book Media and Communications [Toolkit](#) to support members' efforts to advocate for improved library e-book lending practices. The toolkit was prepared by the Digital Content Working Group and OITP. Additional advocacy materials are available on the Transforming Libraries [website](#).

Metrics: The Transforming Libraries website received more than 100,000 page views in the last 12 months and 30,000 page views for the e-book and digital content section.

Establish and advocate for legislative goals

- Promote legislation at the federal level that preserves and promotes fundamental library values. This includes [access](#) legislation, [copyright](#) legislation, the Library Services and Technology Act ([LSTA](#)), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ([ESEA](#)).

Metrics: Working in collaboration with a national network of advocates, the ALA Washington Office coordinated efforts to authorize and then reauthorize LSTA legislation, which in the 2014 federal budget is providing \$154,848,000 to libraries via the [Grants to States Program](#). Other federal support for libraries includes IMLS [grant programs](#) such as National Leadership Grants and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program.

- Coordinate, and train librarians to participate in the Universal Service Schools and Libraries Program, [E-rate](#), which helps schools and libraries acquire Internet access and telecommunication products and services at affordable rates. Since its authorization by Congress in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, more than \$36 billion dollars of discounts have been provided.

Metrics: According to an April 2014 [IMLS report](#), more than 90% of U.S. public libraries have used E-rate.

- Work toward a unified voice and common strategy for the library community in responding to and developing proposals to amend national and international copyright law and policy for the digital environment. This is the goal of the [Library Copyright Alliance](#), which is composed of ALA, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

Metrics: Library Copyright Alliance advocates worked with the World Intellectual Property Assembly (WIPO) to pass the “Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired and Persons with Print Disabilities (the “[Treaty for the Blind](#)”). Alliance members also advocated on behalf of libraries in *Kirtsaeng v. Wiley*, a lawsuit regarding the bedrock “first sale doctrine.” The 6-3 U.S. Supreme Court [decision](#) was a victory for libraries and library users.

Respond to opportunities and threats

- Provide support to libraries facing challenges to the first amendment rights of library users.

Metrics: The Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), on a daily basis, provides support to individuals facing censorship and intellectual freedom challenges. Here’s what one librarian wrote about the help she received from OIF: “**Major thanks to ALA** for all the great information on their website! I’ve got a call tomorrow with the Office of Intellectual Freedom that I’m really looking forward to. I LOVE THIS PROFESSION!” OIF director, Barbara Jones also shared this statement: “Two years ago I attended a seminar on Ray Bradbury at Harold Washington Library Auditorium, with 200 people in attendance. During the Q & A, someone asked about why *Persepolis* was banned in the Chicago Public Schools and what would Bradbury have thought about it? The three panelists talked about how embarrassing the banning was, and how it had become an international story. Then I got up and introduced myself as being from ALA. I kid you not, the audience burst into spontaneous applause. Not for me – for ALA. We have a LOT of good will out there! This is a result of our advocacy.”

- Provide [advocacy software](#) (Capwiz) that increases the capabilities for members and the public to advocate through ALA and chapters at the state and federal levels.

Metrics: Since 2009, 400,000 email messages have been sent through chapter Capwiz sites to help stave off million dollar funding cuts, or other threats to librarians and library and archive services throughout the nation. For example, in both 2010 and 2009 the Florida Library Association rallied library supporters to stop the elimination of the full \$21 million each year of state aid to libraries. Over 60,000 messages were sent through Capwiz. In 2011, there was no discussion among the legislature to cut state library aid. An email header from the executive director of the Florida Library Association to ALA read “State Aid restored - Capwiz was invaluable!” Capwiz also proved invaluable in preventing or restoring cuts in Georgia and Louisiana.